

access at home to do their schoolwork just like the CEO and the manager's child.

Here is the catch, though. The IRS wants to tax that computer provided to that employee. And, of course, we need to stop that. Let us pass the data act. I ask for cosponsorship and bipartisan support.

#### AMERICANS WANT REAL QUALITY HEALTH CARE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the one thing that Americans are now crying out for is real quality health care, restore the relationship between patient and physician, and have this Congress pass a real Patient's Bill of Rights.

And then if we listen to their cry for the seniors, we have one needy senior, one needed prescription drug, and a cost of \$400 for one dose.

It is absolutely imperative when we begin to multiply the cost of \$400 times thousands and thousands of seniors that we provide the opportunity for equal access to lower price prescription drugs for our seniors, get a real importation bill to allow prescription drugs to come in so that seniors can be taken care of and, yes, have a real prescription drug benefit, a guaranteed Medicare benefit.

This is what the Democrats have been advocating. Why can our colleagues on the other side of the aisle not join us to support our seniors to ensure, one, a real Patient's Bill of Rights and, two, real importation as it is in the agriculture conference on the Senate side to provide for lower-cost access to prescription drugs?

#### MEDIA DISPLAYS DOUBLE-STANDARD

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the double-standard that often exists in today's media coverage is obvious. For example, the major networks all provide the Democrats with more convention coverage than the Republicans. More coverage is also given to liberal positions.

Take the issue of gun control. Guns are consistently portrayed as the weapons of criminals. We never hear about a tragedy being averted or a life being saved because a law-abiding citizen was armed with a gun.

Media bias also censors ads. Both the New York Times and USA Today refused to run ads against partial-birth abortions.

This week AL GORE made up a story about what prescription drugs cost his

mother-in-law, and the media all but ignored it.

Why does the media display such a liberal bias? Simply because journalists are more liberal than the rest of us.

A 1996 Roper Center survey found that 89 percent of Washington political writers voted for the Clinton/Gore ticket in 1992, only 9 percent supported George Bush.

#### PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES ARE AGAINST REIMPORTATION OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, seniors face skyrocketing prices for their prescription drugs. Many choose between purchasing their medications and buying groceries. We need a prescription drug benefit through Medicare. It is a necessity that would bring dignity to our seniors' lives and we need to do this.

In addition, the House needs to fight for lower prices. In July we passed an amendment to allow U.S. pharmacists to be able to purchase prescription drugs at the same low prices paid for in other countries, 20, 30, sometimes 50 percent less for the same drug, and then pass the savings along to seniors.

It is common sense. It will bring seniors relief from the crushing costs of prescription drugs. The pharmaceutical companies are waging an all-out campaign against reimportation. It is time we stood up for our seniors. It is time that the Republican leadership stop using empty rhetoric and protect our seniors' right to affordable prescription drugs. We should allow reimportation of prescription drugs, and we should do it now.

#### TIME FOR CONGRESS TO ADMINISTER FIRST AID TO HOSPITALS

(Ms. GRANGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I stood behind the Balanced Budget Act when it was passed in 1997. We all believed it was a good bill that addressed fraud and abuse in Medicare billing. But now, 3 years down the road, we are seeing unintended consequences of this bill.

In 1997, Congress estimated the Balanced Budget Act would cut \$116 billion in fraudulent Medicare payments. Current projection, however, estimate \$227 billion in cuts. These cuts, almost double the original projection, go well beyond fraud and abuse. These cuts threaten vital hospital services.

Walls Regional Hospital in my district serves a growing but primarily rural area, Cleburne, Texas. The hos-

pital recently expanded its Skilled Nursing section from 12 to 25 beds. Just as Walls finished their expansion, the Balanced Budget Act reduced the reimbursement rate for skilled nursing by 70 percent, a loss of a million dollars a year for Walls. Today, despite community needs, the Skilled Nursing facility is down to 11 beds.

It is stories like this that remind us to prioritize our Nation's health services. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress to administer first aid to our hospitals.

#### REIMPORTATION OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

(Mr. CROWLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent in Queens, New York, who pays \$409 for a 3-month supply of Prilosec for his wife. The same drug, the same dosage, same everything, would cost him \$184 in Canada. But it is illegal for him to purchase this medication in Canada and reimport it back into the U.S.

The only crime I see here is the high prices being charged by drug companies. They are truly gouging Americans.

Therefore, I am working with a number of my colleagues to allow individuals, pharmacists, and wholesalers to reimport prescription drugs back into the U.S. and pass the tremendous savings on to all Americans.

The GOP Congress will not pass a Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act.

The GOP Congress will not pass a prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

Well, now I challenge this Congress to allow for the safe reimportation of FDA-approved drugs for Americans. It would lower drug costs by 50 percent overnight without costing the Government of this country one single dime.

Let me say this to America: The drug companies oppose this plan, this bill. Therefore, we all know it must be good for America.

#### WHY THIS LARGE CIGARETTE TAX?

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, let me pose a mathematical problem. When the President finally finishes his budget negotiations with the Congress, he will have spent the projected budget surplus and more.

Where will he go to find the money to finance his liberal spending programs? How about a big cigarette tax? That ought to make everyone happy.

In the North Carolina Senate, when we raised the tax, guess what happened. Tax incomes shrank, as it did in